

268 ÉMILE ZOLA, NOVELIST AND REFORMER

"The Standard," "The Scottish Leader," "The Scotsman," "The Eadical Leader," "The Bradford Observer," "The Country Gentleman," "Piccadilly," "The Newcastle Chronicle," and "The Western Daily Press." There may have been a few others, for the writer does not claim that his collection of press cuttings is absolutely complete; but after examining some hundreds of extracts he finds little that is not mendacious or steeped in religious bigotry, puritanical prudery, or gross ignorance. And at all events it is certain that an overwhelming majority of British editors and "leader-writers" endorsed the views of the Pharisees.

The campaign was then carried to a decisive stage. A firm of solicitors, Collette & Collette, applied at Bow Street police-court for a summons against Henry Vizetelly for having published three obscene books, to wit, "JSTana," "The Soil" ("La Terre"), and "Piping-Hot" ("Pot-Bouille"), by Emile Zola. The summons was granted, and on August 10, 1888, Vizetelly appeared to answer it. The prosecution had been entrusted to Mr. Asquith,—now best known as a politician,—and he, in opening his case, was about to deal with "Nana," when the magistrate, Mr. (afterwards Sir) John Bridge, who evidently had already made up his mind respecting the case, suggested that he

should take the
worst of the three books, namely " The Soil," —
for which, by
the way, Zola had received the* decoration of
the Legion of
Honour three weeks previously ! Counsel
assented, referred
the magistrate to various pages, and then
solemnly declared
that this book and the two others were " the
three most im-
moral books ever published!" But having thus
revealed
how very limited was his knowledge of
literature, he added,
fairly enough, that it was claimed for " The
Soil" that it